



COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER is published six times a year by Community Service, Inc. Our purpose is to promote the small community as a basic social institution involving organic units of economic, social and spiritual development.

concerned citizenship

A Cultural Condition for Survival

by Libby & John Morse

Many activists who have taken on crisis responsibilities burn out, despair and become disillusioned or are involved only at sporadic periods in their lives. And all too many others are apathetic. Could it be that we all lack an underlying philosophy and coherent vision? Is there not a way of concerned living which can provide a life-time continuity in dealing with our common global and human/cultural development issues? This may be the imperative for survival!

We are aware of the interconnectedness among the various crises: Peace, Population, Justice (social and economic), Energy, Environment, Food and Human Resources (useful employment and personal/cultural development). Yet, fragmentation into single-issue approaches takes place because simplification has greater appeal to volunteers and to donors. This means that the underlying structural problems, common to all crises, are left out of our coherent thinking and action. Moreover, these special-issue organizations presume that the members must spend considerable time attending meetings and doing things, all of which conflict with job, family and other demands. Consequently, only relatively few persons become consistently involved. And their task is made more difficult because they, as a minority, are faced with an

apathetic majority. This vast number of disengaged people, without a concerned-citizen vision, become the problem.

Our attempt here is to envision a participating culture in which mutual concern is espoused as being of very high value. Someone has said that the world's work gets done by consortia of the concerned. Fundamentally, then, what is concern?

"Concerned citizenship" is not an ideological position. Rather, it is a set of values and attitudes, coupled with a predisposition to think and to act, which determines how we lead our lives in dealing with the web of interconnected problems affecting improvement of the human condition. This idealized view of concerned living is not new. Indeed, it has its historical roots.

The original meaning of "religion" [religare] is that of "binding." In today's world this means the integration of one's life into the whole fabric of living; not only with people and the environment but with all of our cultural institutions, governmental and non-governmental. We start at the local level and reach out nationally and even globally. Although it is difficult to integrate concerns for the globe and those things which

are generations off into our daily living, it is nonetheless a necessary and, it can be argued, a happy commitment.

This necessary citizen response to today's crises depends on the degree to which our attitudinal set permits us creatively to detect opportunities for actions, large and small. The real world, as we know, involves a complex weaving process, covering the interrelationships among crises and those, in turn, with the threads of our institutions and our lives. But before we rationalize that this impossible complexity forces us into the simple choice of being "good" and doing "good things," let's first "psych" ourselves out, looking back at traditional behavior and some possible pitfalls.

The benevolent old-country dame, Lady Bountiful, responded to the poor's need for food, clothing and shelter, thus doing good things and feeling satisfied in the process. It has taken us time to see that whereas there are good things to be done by good people, this is not sufficient. The simple sum of good works, that only treat the easily-seen symptoms, cannot "solve" the crises. The vocabulary of mathematicians helps clarify the matter. A congregation of well-adjusted, good people, doing good things, may be a "necessary condition" but will not provide a "sufficient condition" to solve the problem. Why? Because the facts affecting the overall situation, including the structural or institutional arrangements, are not necessarily among the elements being reconciled at the level of the individual. This shortcoming is described by philosophers as the "fallacy of composition." (Remember Niebuhr's "moral Man and immoral society," and remember the good Germans that accepted Hitler.)

Fasting, to draw attention to the hungry, can be a satisfying personal experience. This may be necessary for increasing public awareness; but it is not sufficient in the sense of getting at the fundamentals, the root causes of hunger. Crises are interrelated and globally interconnected. We know that peace is not a single issue and cannot be achieved while ignoring the critical elements that produce conflict. Peace demonstrations, valuable as they are, do not focus attention on injustices. More than demonstrations are required. At this moment structural violence, literally

destroying the lives of millions of people, is the consequence of injustices, and of our failures to deal with the interrelated problems of energy, food, population and the environment. Complex problems require careful analyses and coherent approaches. But this does not mean that we all become scholars; rather, that we be attuned to see the connections and the opportunities for action.

The concerned citizen daily has opportunities to observe, read and otherwise to be stimulated, to match up in imaginative fashion problems and ideas with institutions, organizations or responsible persons. This awareness of opportunities for matching action is conditioned by the citizen's lifestyle, attitudes and broad-gauged perspectives; and we are calling for quicker and more habitual efforts to express and apply these in the societal, cultural setting. There would be less crisis management. Instead of organizing some brand new group to cope with a crisis, for example, efficiency would result from the citizens' lubrication of the present, ongoing governmental and non-governmental institutions, that they might see opportunities for modifying their policies and practices. After all, they are our agents, funded by us.

Reading about the Boy Scout merit badge that describes the wonders of nuclear energy and how the bomb fell (sic) on Hiroshima can prompt a call to local Boy Scout officials to suggest some corrective action that might affect a generation of boys.

Reading about a local government's review of a cable TV contract might suggest the opportunity to join with friends to push for public access--something basically important for better community education on local and world issues.

A Farmers' Market, excellent in its own right for cheaper, better quality food, provides the opportunity, through an education leaflet, to help people make the connection between the use of petroleum to air-freight food from out of state and the concomitant military buildup to protect our "vital" oil interests.

It may not always be necessary to create a special group to engage in an extensive educational project related to water pollution.

A single concerned citizen, stimulated by something read, might pass on ideas to those civil servants whose job it is to act. This may be no more complicated than a phone call or the mailing of a xeroxed copy. Knowledge of a good speaker can be passed on to program chairpersons of service clubs.

The list of possibilities can be as long as our individual and concerned imaginations can make it. A review of a listing of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the yellow pages can stimulate imagination--and opportunities for catalytic action.

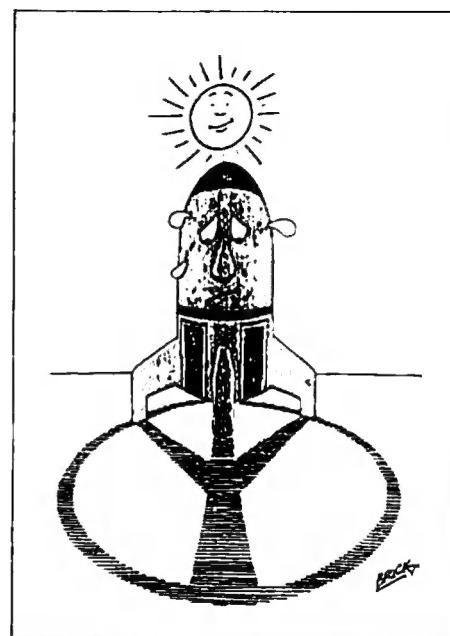
The concerned citizen can act alone. But there is also a need for citizens to phone each other and to meet socially so as to mutually reinforce the whole approach. They need a focal point for the sharing of ideas and the opportunities for action. Again, the basic concept is that in addition to the single-issue projects there are continuing opportunities to aid, abet and otherwise stimulate on-going governmental and non-governmental organizations to do what they are set up to do anyway--but to do now in a wider context. Constantly in the mind's eye is the schematic weaving, with the concerned citizen actuating the shuttle across the interrelated crises having to do with Peace, Food, Energy, Justice, Environment, Population and Human Resources. Up and down the tapestry can be seen the opportunities for actions to stimulate on-going organizations, elected officials and institutions at local and higher levels.

Concerned citizens may naturally coalesce within congregations, clubs, offices or whatever. Exchanges of ideas and plans for action can become a natural part of their meetings. Certain individuals, because of their experience or particular interest, might agree to give special attention to one of the crises. The catalytic action can be continuous through a telephone tree. Conceptually such a system becomes a non-hierarchical living tree, in the sense that any and all cooperating members, when seeing some opportunity, are able to get word to the common trunk and/or to the branch person self-identified as being the responsible focal point for one of the crises. This would be an ideal arrangement for senior citizens who spend much time in reading and getting ideas but who, though

despairing for their grandchildren, are often unable to act.

There is of course the need for the separate crisis organizations; but their progress and our civilization's viability will depend upon the increased acceptance in our culture of the unique and important role of concerned citizens--acting alone or in consortia. And how shall their role be strengthened? It would help if we had less preaching on simply "doing good" and "being good"--preachments too easily accepted for reasons of personal salvation or for personal psychological needs. Instead, let us call people to mutual survival through symbiotic actions. This is, by definition, a full-time proposition--so long as we live!

The authors, John and Libby Morse, welcome criticism and discussion. You may write to them directly at 142 West Lake Rd., Penn Yan, NY 14527; or send your comments to Community Service Newsletter. We request all commentaries intended for publication be limited to 650 words.



News from Raven Rocks

by Warren Stetzel

In 1970 nineteen of us felt some trepidation as we decided to buy 843 acres in southeast Ohio called Raven Rocks and plunged into the hard work it would take to pay for it.

What had brought a group whose average age was only 25 to so bold a move was the possibility that Raven Rocks would be strip mined. Dramatic ravines and rock formations that for generations had been a favorite place for outings would likely be damaged, if not destroyed, and once damaged, could never be restored. It would be gone forever. Our hope was to save it by making it a permanent preserve.

We and our friends have invested tens of thousands of hours of volunteer labor in the effort to pay for the land. More acres have been added to the original 843, to make it a better preserve. We have begun erosion control, soil renewal, and reforestation. Old buildings have had major repair. To pay the bill, we have raised and sold some 50,000 Christmas trees. Meanwhile, the dream of saving Raven Rocks has spawned other projects that are related in spirit and intent, such as the construction of underground buildings which are designed to be gentle on the land.

Our biggest good news item for 1986 is the success of this last Christmas season's tree sales. With a larger harvest of trees than we have had for several years, and with the appeal of our Raven Rocks style of tree--tighter and more full than most--we had the kind of experience about which you would never complain. For the first time since 1978 we had enough trees to sell a good number wholesale: a little over 1,700. We harvested just over 5,150 trees.

While tree sales soared above the economic tide of the area, business for Raven Rocks Concrete managed to hold its own against that tide through 1986. Unemployment in Monroe County, where both our plants are located, was at 24.4% at the end of the year, compared with 7.2% for Ohio and 7.0% for the country as a whole. Referrals save our concrete sales, but also take us all over the area

map. More than 30% of the concrete we sold in 1986 went across the river to West Virginia.

Hundreds of tons of fill material were placed and first floor slabs poured over them at Locust Hill [an underground house] this year. The first concrete of '86 was not poured till October 26, but in the 23 days of tolerable weather we had from then on, nine pours put in place over 37 yards (some 75 tons) of concrete. That concrete, along with the hundreds of tons of fill, was moved up ramps and into place by wheelbarrow.

Our newsletter a year from now should be able to report progress on a second underground house at Raven Rocks. Several Raven Rocks members are getting set to break ground when weather permits. Their building will provide many interesting variations on the underground theme from Locust Hill, a credit to Malcolm Wells, architect for both projects.

We have enjoyed the services of a resident chiropractor since the start of this project. Monday night at the Montana house has become the time when member Tim Starbuck holds forth in the living room, treating mostly other members and an occasional neighbor. What amuses anyone who comes for a treatment, is the atmosphere. It is probably one of the oddest chiropractic offices anywhere, with no real waiting room, no dressing room, and with treatment in the living room. In 1986, word about Tim's skill began to get around the area, and we saw a big increase in activity. Without a regular office, and with so many other activities demanding his time, he has made no effort to find patients. Even so, there have always been a few folks who realize that they might get help here. Now it looks like referrals by clients are going to do for this service what they have for Raven Rocks Christmas trees and concrete.

We also managed in 1986 to print Elsa Crooks Harper's book, An Enchanted Childhood At Raven Rocks. Not 48 hours before we were supposed to open our Christmas tree stands, we picked up the first fifty copies at the bindery in Cleveland and rationed them out to the folks who had agreed to sell them in area stores and offices.

Elsa Crooks was born at Raven Rocks in 1906. Her family owned the land on which we are

building Locust Hill. Inspired by our project to buy and preserve Raven Rocks, she set out in 1975 to write about her childhood years here. We were not aware of her undertaking until she mailed her initial manuscript to us in early 1978. Our immediate reaction was that it should be printed, and that we would like to do the job ourselves, if we could realize our dreams of setting up a press at Raven Rocks. It was 1983 before we could find the resources to set up the press. But not until 1986 was the software available that would make editing and type-setting efficient enough for us to undertake those major tasks in the production of a book. We edited, proofread, set the type, designed, wrote captions, made the halftones, printed and folded the signatures--everything except the binding.

Response to this very big effort has considerably exceeded our hopes and expectations. Local papers gave excellent publicity. Elsa had been a teacher in the area for 37 years and that, along with the recognition of Raven Rocks and the project here, seems to have created a public interest that has led to very lively sales. At one Waldenbooks store, sales during Christmas season ran even with those of Bill Cosby's best seller, Fatherhood. The district manager for Waldenbooks stores for the Columbus district says she's never seen such response to a "local" book. What pleases us most, though, is that folks are not only buying the book--they are actually reading it. We suspect there's going to be more traffic to the ravines for awhile.

Elsa asked that we write a postscript to the book about the current Raven Rocks project, which we did. We were interested in Elsa Harper's story for the obvious reason that it recorded a period in the history of Raven Rocks so well. We also recognized that she was describing, with both factual and emotional accuracy, countless aspects of rural life at the turn of the century that were just as true of many other rural places across this country as they were of Raven Rocks itself. So we wondered if the book as history of a period in the American experience might not have more than local appeal.

But what interested us most in Elsa's book was the recurring theme of a childhood made enchanted, not by affluence, not by preoccupation with fame and gain, nor by the com-

petitive urge to get ahead of the rest, but by mutual effort among people who cared about each other, living in a world whose beauty they recognized and valued. These are themes very close to our hearts and concerns. These are appropriate messages for our times.

The search for ways to assure the continuation of our intentions for Raven Rocks after we are gone commenced almost from the day we decided to buy the place. We remember now what we have judged to be some of the best advice we've had about ways to accomplish it. This advice came from a woman who has worked for such organizations as the Nature Conservancy and Friends of the Earth. At the time we contacted her, she was working as a consultant to Governor Celeste of Ohio, the object of her efforts being the preservation of Wayne National Forest in the face of efforts by the Reagan administration to diminish its size and alter its guidelines in favor of industry and development. She urged us to look first to the interest and loyalty of area folks. They are the ones over the long haul who will go to bat if something they care about is threatened. There is no doubt in our minds that Elsa's affectionate account of her childhood here and the reception that account is receiving, broadens and deepens this local base of awareness and goodwill. It is something to have the Sheriff of Belmont county call up to ask how he might give us a boost. A student of Elsa's years ago, he used to hike out here with his buddies to explore the ravines.

So what of bad news? The first thing that comes to mind is the fact that each year we see more effects than the year before of air pollution on the Christmas trees. We see real damage, some of it significant damage that the state agricultural research station identifies as the consequence of intense episodes of air pollution.

Perhaps only four or five years away we anticipate the invasion of the gypsy moth, which is already into our county. The consequences to the Christmas tree business, and to the forest, we have neither the time nor the information to adequately weigh yet.

Both the increasingly serious effects of air pollution and the threat of the gypsy moth are good reminders that Raven Rocks is part

of the larger world. We won't solve either of these problems by ourselves. That is good. The message in this kind of event--that all things are connected--is not one we resist or resent, convinced as we are that there are few messages we human beings need more to learn.

We had high hopes when we undertook this project that some of the things we try here might help make our world a little better. It has never been our wish to create a better world for ourselves alone. We have felt from the start that what could be made better here needs to be a lever on the larger world. Otherwise it should go, and it will go, the way of all selfish endeavors that seek to sustain themselves in contradiction to the fundamental truth that all things are connected, all are related, all are one. We are our brother's keeper. That other fellow and his welfare bears the same kind of relationship to us persons, as does Raven Rocks to the larger world of places and things.

Meanwhile, we stick to our Raven Rocks guns, still convinced as we are that the real test of any of our ideas and ideals is whether we can make them part of our daily lives, part of our way of seeing, of doing, and of being. Ideas that find no root in our own lives, in our habits, may ring around the world, but are nothing when the sound ceases. And hence the faithfulness to the exercises of work and commitment to preserve Raven Rocks. For us, this is the place where, this is the time when, and these are the tasks by which we hope to practice our ideas and make them flesh. It is not that Raven Rocks and its preservation are the ultimate goal. Rather this is the door through which we peer, through which we venture farther into the real world freer to know and to feel for all.

The threat to Raven Rocks was a cry, and responding to that cry may let us play our part in the attainment of more ultimate goals. It is so with the cry of the vanishing species, or of the South African black, the poisoned soil and seas, and the Nicaraguan peasant. All things are connected.

This article was edited and condensed from the February 1987 Raven Rocks newsletter and their December 1986 Christmas tree brochure.

The Real Lake Wobegon

OR WHAT GARRISON KEILLOR WON'T TELL YOU.

by Mark Olson-Sierra

Not long ago, I went to the real Lake Wobegon in Minnesota. I suspect that Garrison Keillor knows about the real Lake Wobegon, but doesn't care to mention it. He's too busy spinning folksy yarns for the radio program Prairie Home Companion. The real Lake Wobegon is like the rest of Minnesota with around 40% of its farmers going under or in bad financial shape....

To get to the real Lake Wobegon, you first need to get a bus ticket in Minneapolis....A voice on the loudspeaker announced the last call for the bus to Aberdeen, South Dakota and points west. I boarded knowing that Lake Wobegon would still be another 30 miles from my destination. Buses don't regularly go to Lake Wobegon anymore!

This time, my parents were picking me up instead of my hitch-hiking from the closest town. I was among the last to board the bus. Already seated were two little old ladies, a drunk that sounded and looked like a distorted Buddy Holly when he talked, his drunk companion, a black man with Nordic blue eyes, a native American, a stout man sporting a crew cut and a sullen man in an army fatigue coat, soiled blue jeans and farmer boots. The latter man fit the Norwegian bachelor description of Keillor fame with the exception of his Vietnam-era fatigue coat....

Outside our traveling glass tube, the tree population had rapidly declined in density and number and the small villages were becoming more frequent. Over three hours had passed. Each village sports a sign announcing the name of the village, its population of 700, 450 or whatever and its status as a city. Although a city in name, the dominant building is the grain elevator set against the railroad tracks with several freight cars waiting to be filled with the prairies' bountiful grains. Often there are two or more elevators which is a very impressive sight when set against the flat prairie. There is little else save some junked cars, a bar, a gas station, a few houses and a church.

At DeGraff, Minnesota, the bus stopped to pick up a woman who seemed quite experienced in the boarding of Greyhound buses. She greeted the bus driver who asked her how far down the road she was going today in a familiar instead of perfunctory tone. No ticket or money was exchanged. Turning, she spotted the Norwegian bachelor type in the army coat. "Why Mr. Norby" she exclaimed in sing-songy Minnesotan intonations, "how are you? How long has it been, seven years?" Mr. Norby's face lit up as she sat down beside him. He explained in rapid monotones, with what must have been an immense amount of animation for him, how he was working occasionally at bars in the Twin Cities. The new passenger couldn't conceive of how anyone would live in "them thar cities." This encouraged Mr. Norby to reciprocate with an invitation to drop by the shelter for homeless people in Minneapolis and look him up. He'd gladly give her the grand tour of Minneapolis.



Most of the passengers disembarked at Wilmar Only Mr. Norby and his conversant companion from DeGraff remained on the bus; one middle-aged housewife boarded in Wilmar. The local landmarks in Wilmar include a gold-gilded Kandiyohi Indian with a fish at hand and a dog at his side. The less visible landmark is the "Wilmar 8", eight women who boycotted a local bank after losing jobs in a dispute about unfair promotion practices. For over a year, through cold blizzards and sweltering heat, they picketed in an attempt to bring attention to their cause. They never regained their jobs, but a leftist documentary film was made about them. Garrison Keillor would never mention this kind of strong women although he is prone to mention Dorothy of tuna cha-cha fame at the Chatterbox Cafe.

Close to my destination, all of us spotted a group of farmers at some sale. It wasn't really clear what was going on, but it seemed like everyone had shown up for an auction of some kind, perhaps another farmer's machinery and equipment. The sight of the farmers brought Mr. Norby's companion to solemnly conclude, "Those farmers are wicked!" When I

reached my destination, still some 30 miles from the real Lake Wobegon, the waiting seemed endless before my parents could pick me up. You should be prepared for waiting if you go to the real Lake Wobegon; the connections aren't always smooth. Still, I felt that I had reached home after the bus passed Kerkhoven; some undefinable prairie angst re-occupied my being there. The prairie angst that social reformer Hamlin Garland described in his Main Traveling Roads some eighty years ago was working itself on my muted innards.

During my stay I would visit with and draw my emotional uplift from Lake Wobegon's less known and more marginal citizenry. For example, there is the part-Arapaho woman who goes by the name Shannon although her birth name is Feather Marie; she told me about how she had to donate one night's work at Wobegon's only pizza joint to get the job. Garrison Keillor wouldn't tell you about worker exploitation.

Then there's John who has a computer store where he sells "Taiwanese Garage Specials" (no-name IBM clones). John is always ready to sit down and discuss Lake Wobegon life and citizenry over coffee (or whiskey, if its the evening). He can tell you, for example, about how a local banker was caught in the sack with another woman. In his opinion, the Tip Top Tap tavern started on the skids when the daughter of a local high school teacher decided that she could strip better than the paid stripper. This brought commentary, apparently, in the local Wobegon Sun and Tribune about bars corrupting the morals of local youth. For John, selling computers is a hobby or tax write-off to keep his real estate income down to five figures. His real pre-occupation is the occult and understanding the eventual effects of the two eclipses on Lake Wobegon and the United States....

I would be errant if I didn't mention LaVonne. Until a few years ago, this slight, slim woman was driving her own semi tractor rig while raising her family of three boys and a girl. LaVonne took it hard when one of her sons died in a hunting accident. She still has her rig but she stopped driving it because there just wasn't enough money to be made. She has been trying to sell it, but no one wants to give her the price she wants. She's working at a local country and western

bar serving and making drinks when she's not there imbibing quantities herself. Garrison Keillor won't tell you much about the social, political or economic relationships between people, much less the relationship of the astral plains or eclipses to Lake Wobegon. When I compare the citizenry that I know from the Lake Wobegon area and the ones that Garrison Keillor talks about, I get the impression that we are talking about different worlds. The people that I have been talking to see and feel the pain of their Lake Wobegon dying. They see the hypocrisy and confining qualities of the place, but somehow hang in there just the same. The local Chamber of Commerce came out with a "Get Behind Lake Wobegon" bumper sticker. It seems to conceal the anxiety and desperation that just about everyone feels. In Garrison Keillor's version of Lake Wobegon, old ladies have sons that hide their jello with miniature marshmallows at the catered baptism functions in the Twin Cities and all they can do is talk to the dog. The feelings are sanitized and pollyanna-ized for New Yorker publication.

Somehow I can't help but feel that his immortalization and celebration of select images of the small town when it is dying has much in common with our infatuation with cowboys when it was becoming an occupational hazard to be one. Cowboys went the way of dinosaurs on the road to extinction. Now we're on the same infatuation trip with small towns and the living rooms are full of coffee-table books with anecdotes of simple people leading simple lives. While Garrison Keillor cashes in on the prairie angst of small Minnesota towns by packaging their experiences for urban middle-class consumption, Wobegon's local bankers are cashing in on the bad loans of farmers setting the stage for a depopulated Lake Wobegon and tract farming, corporate style. Rural sociologists knew a long time ago that cashing in on prairie angst can be good business; at least Garrison Keillor leaves us with a laugh.



Mark Olson-Sierra is a PhD candidate in the Department of Rural Sociology at Cornell University. This story was inspired by a recent trip through Minnesota and appears here in condensed form.

Book Review



An Enchanted Childhood at Raven Rocks by Elsa Crooks Harper, Raven Rocks Press, Beallsville, Ohio, 1986, 271 pp., cloth. Available from Community Service for \$15.00 postpaid.

"I shall try to take you back to the country surrounding the Raven Rocks where the air was soft and pure; where luxuries were very scarce, but we were very happy because we never expected the impossible; where life was lived to the fullest; where there was lots of hard work, but all was done by a family that enjoyed being together."

So the author states her purpose. The time is the early 1900's; the place is Belmont County, Ohio. The Raven Rocks is a massive rock formation and ravine. Elsa Crooks Harper's childhood home overlooked the Raven Rocks. Her family lived within a small rural community. An Enchanted Childhood records Harper's memories, feelings, and insights about that community.

This book is first and foremost a pleasure to read. Its detailed accounts of the daily and seasonal life of the Harper farm and the Raven Rocks community are absorbing. Harper relives for her reader such integral aspects of Raven Rocks life as quilting bees, box socials, corn husking, soap making, threshing time, country cooking, taffy pulls, cider making, canning and preserving, and much, much more. She tells us in rich detail about front porches, general stores, country doctors, one-room schoolhouses, barns, country kitchens, even the house out back. She describes the working layout of a farm with its stable, chicken house, wood lot, pig pen, cow barn, granary, orchard, smoke house, wagon shed and various other necessary outbuildings. She provides us with several pages of home cures, old time recipes, household hints and some of her poetry.

One of my favorite chapters is entitled "Smells and Sounds." Here we experience her life and the life of her community through its everyday smells and sounds; the sounds of sleigh bells on a frosty night, the steady rhythm of milk squirting into the tin pail, the ringing of the school bell, the chunking

sound of the ax splitting the firewood for the stove, the squeak and the rasp of the old pump straining to bring forth a bucket of fresh water, the crowing of the rooster.

Then there's the aroma of fresh baked bread sliding out of the big old black cookstove, the smell of stored apples in the cellar, honey fresh from the hives, grapes ripening on vines over the arbor, the smell of the rich earth at plowing time, the smell of freshly churned butter, new-mown hay.

Harper also describes a way of life that was much gentler from an ecological perspective. Pioneer traditions of frugality and thrift, "waste not, want not" were very much a part of the Raven Rocks lifestyle. She mentions that garbage cans were unheard of; there was no "garbage." Every scrap of food was consumed. If it didn't land in the ever-present stock pot on the back of the stove, it ended up as animal feed. Ashes from the stove and fireplace were used as garden fertilizer, placed in the chicken house so that the chickens could dust it on themselves to kill lice and mites, used in soap making, or spread on icy paths in the winter. Every piece of string was saved for later use. Paper was never discarded, whether it was an old Sears catalog or an outdated calendar. Salt came in cloth bags which, when empty, were taken apart and made into hankies, often with crocheted edging. These common sense patterns of living give one pause to consider our present destructive habits.

Along these same lines, people in the Raven Rocks community knew what it meant to share with their neighbors. The extraordinarily wasteful duplication of consumer items in our own culture did not exist at Raven Rocks. Not only equipment but skills, talent, time, energy and ideas were all part of a common pool of resources available to all. One family might have the quilting frame or the sausage grinder or the extra team of horses, another family owned a gramophone and would play music into the phone line for everyone to enjoy. Threshing time was a joint community effort. Buildings were raised by the community for newlyweds. Barter was the order of the day at the general store. Neighbors worked and played together, often at the same time. Many types of "bees" were held during the year, combining cooperative work and fun.

Not only is this book enjoyable, it also gives one much food for thought. Harper offers many gently astute comments and insights about life at Raven Rocks at the beginning of this century as contrasted with modern-day life. One of my favorites is her discussion about the family preparations for winter:

When at last the Old North Wind did come in earnest, blowing the swirling, dancing snowflakes into a cover that blanketed the labored land for its earned winter rest, we too could rest, our labors well done, for a little while, at least. We could greet the winter with open arms, and with hearts that were glad. We were through getting ready for winter to come, for it was here, and we could enjoy it because we were prepared. Since we had done it ourselves as a family, with some assistance from the neighbors, we could sit back with an inner feeling of satisfaction that comes only from a job well done. It is man's natural instinct, much like the rest of the animal kingdom, to prepare himself for the winter ahead, and when he has done his job well, he is at peace with himself and with God. Man in his inventive genius has deprived himself today of many joys, and perhaps one of the greatest is preparing himself for the "Coming of Winter."

A postscript by Warren Stetzel tells the reader about the modern day Raven Rocks community, a private project begun in 1970 with the intention of creating a permanent preserve of this area (see page 4 of this newsletter.)

This book is finely printed by photographer-printer John M. Morgan. It contains many vintage photographs of Raven Rocks in Harper's time as well as of the current project.

This book will provide you with simple pleasure, quiet reflection and reverie. It would also be an ideal gift.

--Dianne Adkinson





Announcements

TRADITIONAL INDIAN MEDICINE

"Traditional Indian Medicine, a sacred way of life and well-being," is a conference presenting the philosophies and concepts of traditional Indian Medicine and how they apply to today's health care system. It will be held April 19-24 in Fresno, CA.; sponsored by Fernald Center of Springville, CA and St. Mary's Hospital/Health Center of Tucson, AZ. For information, contact Fernald Center, P.O. Box 698, Springville, CA 93265; 209/539-3945.



RADICAL THOUGHT CONFERENCE

What was radical 100 years ago now seems commonplace. And original thinking that may have been dismissed 30 years ago is motivating hundreds of women today. What will it mean to be radical in the future?

These questions will be addressed at the National Conference on Radical Thought for Women, April 30-May 3, 1987 in Cleveland, Ohio. For additional information contact: Women's Building Project, P.O. Box 18129, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118; 216/321-8582.



WORKER-OWNERSHIP CONFERENCE

Twin Streams Educational Center announces the Sixth Annual Conference for North Carolina Worker Owned and Cooperative Businesses, June 5-7 at the Episcopal Center, Browns Summit, N.C. (near Greensboro.)

The conference is geared to feature the workers as they share what they have learned from their Coopertive experiences. Members of the N.C. Advocacy and support groups will also participate. Cost for three days, five meals is \$70.00. For more information contact Wes Hare at Twin Streams, 243 Flemington St., Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514; 919/929-3316.

Friends Music Camp

Music Quakerism Community

Friends Music Camp invites inquiries about its summer program for 10-18 year olds. The camp, which features music, Quaker experience and community, meets at Olney Friends School in Barnesville, Ohio. Dates in 1987 are July 12-August 9. For more information and brochure, write: FMC, P.O. Box 427, Yellow Springs, OH 45387; or call 513/767-1311.



COMMUNITY

Triform, affiliated to the Camphill Movement, offers training to learning disabled young adults. Centered around 80 acres in the upper Hudson Valley, Triform is community-based, where social development and education are harmoniously united through farming, gardening, homemaking skills, woodworking, weaving, as well as artistic and academic courses--education is furthered on many levels. We are now 32 people, but steadily expanding. For further information, please write to: Margrit Metraux, Triform, R.D. 4, Box 151, Water St. Rd., Hudson, NY 12534.



COURSE ON INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

A summer course titled "Alternative Communities Today and Tomorrow" will be held at the Sirius Community near Amherst, Massachusetts. This course will explore the benefits and challenges of community living, and the innovative ideas being pioneered by these "research and development centers" for both social and personal change. New community approaches to societal problems will be studied, including bio-dynamic agriculture, Mondragon cooperatives, land trusts, bio-shelters, solar energy, arcologies, social investment, group attunement and "creative conflict" techniques. Thirty new age communities will be surveyed, including Findhorn, Twin Oaks, Stelle, Chinook and High Wind. Includes slideshows and field trips

(with text *Builders of the Dawn* by the instructors). Three credits; an additional credit for living-in experience may be obtained as independent study. Course dates are June 2-12. For costs and application information write: Sirius University Program, Baker Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072; 413/259-1505.



APRIL

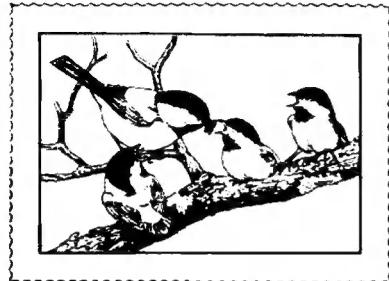
The mills of the gods grind slow, they say,

And the wheel of the year turns day by day.

So it is with much rejoicing when Sweet April comes around again, For though it may be muddy, still It carries courage to the will.

Let small flowers open, small birds sing And tell my heart that it is spring, For April is no more a part Of the wheel of the year than of the heart And as much as a bird a heart can long For an April wind and an April song.

This poem, by James Dillet Freeman, originally appeared in the Daily Word, Unity Village, MO 64065.



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Membership

Membership is a means of supporting and sharing the work of Community Service. The basic \$15 annual membership contribution includes a subscription to our bi-monthly NEWSLETTER and 10% off all Community Service-published literature. Larger contributions are always needed however, and smaller ones will be gladly accepted. Community Service is a non-profit corporation which depends on contributions to run its operation. All contributions are appreciated, needed and tax deductible. Due to added postage costs, overseas membership is \$20 in U.S. currency.

Editor's Note

We welcome letters to the editor (under 300 words) and articles (700-1500 words) about any notable communities or people who are improving the quality of life in their communities. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish the article returned. The only compensation we can offer is the satisfaction of seeing your words in print and knowing you have helped spread encouraging and/or educational information.

Address Changes

If there is an error on your mailing label, please send the old label and any corrections to us promptly. It increases our cost greatly if the Post Office notifies us of moves, not to mention that we like hearing from our members and friends!

Have Your Friends Seen the Newsletter?

Please send the names and addresses of your friends who might enjoy receiving a sample NEWSLETTER and booklist. (If you wish specific issues sent, please send .50 per copy.)

Editor's Note #2

We occassionally exchange our mailing list with a group with similar purposes such as the Arthur Morgan School at Celo or Communities Magazine. If you do not wish us to give your name to anyone, please let us know.

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You can tell when your Community Service membership expires by looking at the month and year in the upper left corner of your mailing label. Please renew your membership now if it has expired or will expire before 4/87. The minimum membership contribution is \$15 per year. We do not send individual reminders to renew.

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